

Homily Summary – 20th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year C)

Overview: Today's Gospel may feel startling: Jesus, the Prince of Peace, declares that He has come not to bring peace but division (Luke 12:49–53). How do we reconcile this with His call to unity and harmony? Christ's fire purifies and transforms, demanding a response, which could lead to undesired division. This is because authentic peace is never superficial; it must be rooted in truth and love. Division arises when hearts resist God's call to conversion, yet fidelity to Christ always leads to lasting peace within.

Main Points

1. Jesus' Fire Purifies and Divides

- Christ's mission is to ignite hearts with the fire of God's love.
- Division occurs not because Christ desires conflict, but because His truth demands a choice (Luke 12:49–53).

2. The Example of Jeremiah

- Jeremiah was thrown into a cistern for proclaiming God's truth (Jeremiah 38:4–6).
- Like Jeremiah, disciples may suffer rejection or opposition when they live faithfully.

3. The Human Heart and Resistance to God

- Greed resists generosity, dishonesty resists truth, resentment resists forgiveness.
- Division arises when hearts remain closed to God's call to conversion.

4. Following Jesus Requires Perseverance

- "Let us persevere in running the race... keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus" (Hebrews 12:1–2).
- Discipleship involves sacrifice, renunciation, and courage to stand apart from the crowd.

5. True Peace Is Built on Truth

- Jesus rejects superficial harmony that ignores sin or injustice.
- St. Augustine: Christ came "to separate what was falsely united and unite what was wrongly separated."

6. We Are Never Alone

- Even when discipleship leads to division, Christ, the saints, and the Church stand with us.
 - Authentic love and truth must guide our pursuit of peace.
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Key Bible Verses

- Luke 12:49–53 – "I have come to set the earth on fire... not peace but division."
 - Jeremiah 38:4–6 – Jeremiah thrown into a cistern for proclaiming God's word.
 - Hebrews 12:1–2 – "Persevere in running the race... keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus."
 - John 14:27 – "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you."
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Catechism References

- **CCC 1696** – "The way of Christ leads to life... There is no discipleship without renunciation and a deliberate choice to follow Christ."
 - **CCC 1816** – The disciple of Christ must "confess the faith without giving way to fear."
 - **CCC 1848** – Conversion requires uncovering sin and accepting God's truth.
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Reflection Questions

1. Where in my life am I tempted to choose comfort over truth?
2. How do I respond when faith puts me at odds with others?
3. What "fire" of God's love is Christ asking me to embrace more fully?
4. How can I cultivate authentic peace in my family, workplace, or community, without compromising on truth?
5. Do I persevere with my eyes fixed on Jesus when discipleship feels difficult?

Rhyme summary:

Christ's teaching refines, yet His truth divides,
Exposing in hearts where sin still hides.
Like Jeremiah, we too must be strong,
Though the world might sometimes claim that we're wrong.
True peace is more than just outward show,
It blooms where hearts let God's truth and love grow.
Peaceful in strife, may our eyes always stay,
Fixed firmly on Jesus, the Truth, the Way.

Reasons to come to Mass each weekend

Hebrews 10:24-25 - "And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

Exodus 20:8 - "Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy."

Luke 22:19 - "Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'"

Acts 2:42 - "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."

John 6:53-54 - "So Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day.'"

Psalms 122:1 - "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord!'"

Matthew 18:20 - "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

Colossians 3:16 - "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God."

Additional resources to learn more about God and the Catholic faith

- Check out the resource list available on www.frmerkley.com
- Catholic Answers: <https://www.catholic.com/>
- Word on Fire: <https://www.wordonfire.org/>
- Formed: <https://formed.org/>
- The Coming Home Network: <https://chnetwork.org/>
- Catholic Exchange: <https://catholicexchange.com/>
- Dynamic Catholic: <https://dynamiccatholic.com/>
- The Augustine Institute: <https://augustineinstitute.org/>
- Ascension Press: <https://ascensionpress.com/>
- EWTN: <https://www.ewtn.com/>
- The Catholic Company: <https://www.catholiccompany.com/>
- Busted Halo: <https://bustedhalo.com/>
- CatholicCulture.org: <https://www.catholicculture.org/>
- The Thomistic Institute: <https://thomisticinstitute.org/>
- Ignatius Press: <https://www.ignatius.com/>
- Catholic Education Resource Center (CERC): <https://www.catholiceducation.org/>